

WARRIOR CARE

NEWSLETTER



A Message from Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Warrior Care Policy

Mr. James D. Rodriguez, MA
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense

Proactively sharing information about its mission, programs, resources and future state is essential to the long term success of any organization. The Office of Warrior Care Policy is no different. While we are moving out in multiple directions to ensure continued exceptional non-medical care coordination for wounded, ill and injured Service members, it is important that we make certain our stakeholders are well informed and educated on what's happening in warrior care. Accordingly, we have decided to reinvigorate the Warrior Care Policy Newsletter, appropriately kicking-off the new edition during Warrior Care Month.

When then Secretary of Defense Robert Gates designated November as Warrior Care Month in 2008, he indicated the purpose was to increase awareness of programs and resources available to wounded, ill, and injured service members, their families, and those who care about them. Since that time, the purpose outlined for Warrior Care Month has been adopted by Warrior Care Policy and influences how we operate on a daily basis. Much of what Warrior Care Policy and its support staff endeavor to accomplish centers on making sure Service members and their families understand the full breadth of programs and resources available for them and their families should they become wounded, ill or injured.

In each edition of the Warrior Care Newsletter we will highlight some of the important activities taking place in the warrior care space. We hope by reading this newsletter you become more familiar with programs and resources that you may have not known much about previously. We also hope you will carry the information about warrior care programs and resources forward to those Service members, family members and caregivers who could benefit. While Warrior Care Policy works tirelessly to provide information to those who need it, we can always benefit from more voices carrying the warrior care message. ■

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In the Spotlight

Former OWF Intern: Darryl Champagne

Serving our wounded, ill and injured Service members and Veterans takes a level of care and dedication which Darryl Champagne knows all too well. For 21 years, Darryl committed to a life of service in the U.S. Army until he became injured in 2012, and ultimately retired in 2013.

During his recovery, Darryl joined the [Army Wounded Warrior Program \(AW2\)](#) at Fort Eustis Warrior Transition Unit. The AW2 program assists and advocates for wounded, ill, or injured Soldiers, Veterans, and their families and caregivers.

While participating in the program, Darryl was introduced to [Operation Warfighter \(OWF\)](#), the Department of Defense (DoD), Office of Warrior Care Policy internship program. The program provided opportunities for Darryl to participate in internships



people to speak with," Darryl said.

Al's coaching helped Darryl land an internship with Joint Staff J7 from February 2013 through April 2013.

"The OWF internship program gives you more confidence during your transition and gives you a network," said Darryl. "Participating in OWF allowed me to learn new skill sets."

In April 2013, Darryl met the Vice President of a prominent contracting agency, and while he wasn't hired

the Department of Veterans Affairs working in their Human Resources Department.

"I like that I have more face-to-face interactions, giving back the way the OWF program helped me," said Darryl.

To wounded, ill, and injured Service members participating in a wounded warrior program, Darryl encourages them to become active in the OWF program.

"Anyone that has the opportunity to

"Anyone that has the opportunity to participate in OWF should take that opportunity...they're really dedicated to helping you out as long as you put forth the effort. Two to three years later, I'm still in contact with many people that helped me."

—Darryl Champagne

with Federal agencies during his rehabilitation process.

Darryl was assigned to an OWF Coordinator, Al Whelcher, who helped make his resume marketable in the civilian workforce.

"My resume may not have said what it needed to say to grab people's attention, but OWF helped me with that and matched me with the right

for a position, he left with a lasting impression. About four months later, Darryl was contacted with a request to interview with the agency, and was hired shortly thereafter.

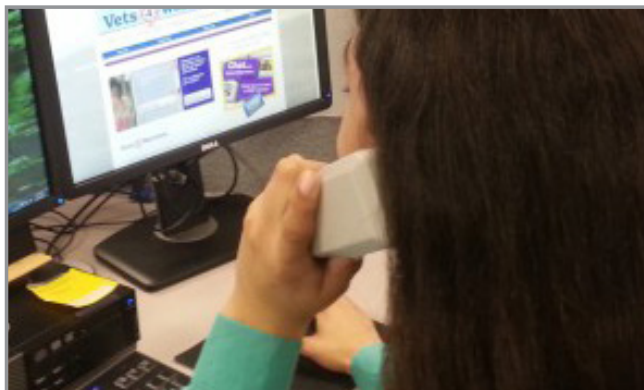
Darryl worked for the agency for almost two years before transitioning to a civilian government career with the Office of Civilian Human Resources (OCHR). Then in August 2015, he joined

participate in OWF should take that opportunity," says Darryl. "They're really dedicated to helping you out as long as you put forth the effort. Two to three years later, I'm still in contact with many people that helped me."

For more information on the Operation Warfighter (OWF) program, please visit the [Warrior Care blog site](#). ■

Military Caregiver Support

Every day, more than five million brave Americans serve our nation. They are not Service members, but they are the spouses,



friends, and family members who assist our wounded, ill and injured Service members and veterans with the tasks of daily living, something many of us take for granted. These hidden heroes are our military caregivers.

Their caregiving duties combined with juggling other work and family responsibilities can be overwhelming, but the value of their devotion is priceless. Care and support for these hidden heroes is needed so they can continue to serve their service members.

The Department of Defense (DoD), [Office of Warrior Care Policy \(WCP\)](#) is taking a proactive role through [Military Caregiver Support Resources and the PEER Forum Initiative](#) to provide customized support to military caregivers by creating a dialog to better understand who military caregivers are, what role they play, and how they can best be supported.

Since 2013, DoD's support for military caregivers has positively supported thousands of lives by addressing key issues that affect caregivers in the short and long term. These issues often include finances, education, employment, transportation, maintaining a strong family, keeping mentally and physically healthy, navigating through legal issues and housing.

DoD's support to military caregivers includes the Caregiver Resource Directory, the Military Caregiver PEER Forums, monthly Military Caregiver Virtual PEER Forums, Military Caregiver Webinars, caregiver-related events, and specialized resources.

Caregiver Resource Directory (CRD)

The CRD includes a list of specialized resources specifically for military caregivers. Topics include: helplines, advocacy and benefit information, career transitions and employment, military caregiver support, children's needs, education and training, financial support, leisure activities, and much more.

You can [download the CRD online](#) or [contact us to request print versions](#). Make sure to include the number of CRDs requested, a shipping address, and your name.

Military Caregiver PEER Forums

Military Caregiver PEER Forums are held on 62 military installations throughout the nation where military caregivers can convene, converse among their peers, share resources and best practices, and provide support in a secure environment with a Military and Family Life Counselor. WCP also has ten PEER Support Coordinators who support these forums and caregivers at the installation level.

[Find a forum near you.](#)

Military Caregiver Virtual PEER Forums

[Military Caregiver Virtual PEER Forums](#) are held on the 4th Thursday of each month for those who are unable to attend an in-person forum.

Military Caregiver Webinars

Webinars for military caregivers are hosted in collaboration with Military OneSource on specific topics like: coping with post-traumatic stress and post-traumatic stress disorder; coping with traumatic brain injuries; and helping families adapt to find their new balance.

Military caregivers are not alone. There is a community full of resources and support. To become involved in the community, contact a member of the DoD military caregiver team at OSD.Caregiver@mail.mil to learn more about caregiver support, find local PEER Forums and RSVP for Virtual PEER Forums.

More information about the Military Caregiver Support Initiative, forums, and other resources can be found at www.warriorcare.mil.



Their caregiving duties combined with juggling other work and family duties can be overwhelming but the cost of their devotion is priceless.

Strengthening the Disability Evaluation System

The Department of Defense (DoD) is committed to honoring the service and sacrifice of our Nation's wounded, ill, and injured Service members through proactive policy and programs, including the Disability Evaluation System. The DoD ensures Service members with line of duty injuries or illnesses, who can no longer perform their military duties, separate and receive a disability severance or disability retirement through the military disability evaluation system. If a Service member is wounded, ill, or injured while on active-duty, the goal is return to his or her unit. However, if found unfit to perform those duties, there are a couple of potential outcomes, including: separation with a lump sum severance payment, separation without pay, temporary retirement, and permanent retirement.

Did you know that the U.S. government has provided military disability compensation since the Civil War? As the nature of military engagements worldwide has changed, so too has the military disability system. Today, the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) incorporates DoD and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) processes. The VA conducts examinations of all of a Service member's medical conditions (both DoD-reported and Service member-claimed). The DoD determines a Service member's fitness for duty based on those exam results and other relevant evidence, and if the Service member is found medically unfit for duty, he or she receives a proposed disability rating from the VA, finalized when or if he or she leaves service. The DoD compensates for all unfitting conditions and the VA provides compensation for all other service related conditions.

DoD and VA are committed to continually improving the DES, making it more flexible for the departments and the Service member. Recent evolutions

and improvements to the IDES include:

- Implementation of a first-of-its-kind quality assurance program to evaluate the accuracy of case outcomes, enhance consistency across the Military Departments, and build greater accountability and performance measures for stakeholders such as Physical Evaluation Board Liaison Officers, physicians, and adjudicators
- Significant progress in developing a DES information technology infrastructure, to increase data accuracy, timeliness, and transparency, reducing reliance on manual processes
- Increased Military Department staffing of IDES adjudicators and case managers, which allows for more personalized counseling for Service members and decreased processing time
- To date in Fiscal Year 2015, Service member IDES satisfaction rates remain at 86 percent or higher

If you have questions about the Integrated Disability Evaluation System, send them to us on Twitter using #IDESQs. ■



Training Notes

Have you ever participated in training? Of course you have if you've been in the work place for more than a day. Training is essential to the healthy functioning of an organization; however the evaluation of training is vital. The evaluation of training tells the organization if they are providing the right training, at the right time and if it's presented on the right platform.

Consider for a moment one of the basic training truisms; the most important person in the room is the learner. Yes, you are the most important person in the room, whether it be an instructor led training or a virtual training. So your opinion counts...a lot! When you have the opportunity to complete a training evaluation, take a few moments to do it because your opinion counts. It's just like voting, if you don't participate, how can you expect things to change? ■



Events Calendar November

- 12 Warrior Care Month Healing Arts Recognition Event**
10am, Pentagon, Apex 9-10, Floor 2
- 16 All Service Wheelchair Rugby Exhibition**
8am, Joint Base Andrews, West Fitness Center, Building 1444
- 17 Facebook Town Hall**
www.facebook.com/warriorcare
2:30pm-4pm
- 18 Operation Warfighter Internship Fair**
11am-2pm, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bldg 62
- 18 Military Caregiver PEER Forum**
1pm-3pm, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bldg. 62, Conference Room 2049

- 19 Joint Services Sitting Volleyball Tournament**
8:30am, Pentagon Athletic Center
Click here for live coverage of the event - <https://www.dvidshub.net/webcast/7268>
- 19 Military Caregiver PEER Forum**
1pm-3pm, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, SFAC
- 20 A&FRC**
1pm-3pm, Joint Base Andrews
- 26 Military Caregiver Virtual PEER Forums**
[Contact us to RSVP](#)

Discover more Military Caregiver PEER Forums in [your area](#).



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